requirements and performance metrics, in other words the inputs and outputs of the project.

The invention recited in claim 1 is novel with respect to Higgins et al. Higgins et al. does not mention project data, actions or activities, as required by the claims of the present application. Higgins et al. makes reference to system requirements, but these are metrics corresponding to the various resource requirements as inputs of the project and performance metrics, which are outputs of the project. Specifically, the system requirements do not relate to processes which might take place during the course of the project. In contrast, claim 1 claims the use of actions. Actions and activities are processes within the project, which may or may not be prompted as a consequence of the resource requirements and metrics of the project. Hence, the system requirements disclosed by Higgins et al. as metrics are distinct from the very concept of actions as processes, required by the claims of the present application. Similarly, system requirements are also distinct from the concept of activities, as distinguished from actions in the present application.

As a consequence, Higgins et al. does not disclose explicitly or implicitly that the system requirements comprise a plurality of actions, nor the step of analyzing the project data to identify a plurality of activities. Hence, Higgins et al. lacks at least the steps of accessing project data consisting of a plurality of actions to be performed; and analyzing the project data to identify a plurality of activities to at least some of which is assigned at least one risk indicator.

Correspondingly, Higgins et al. lacks at least the steps of: outputting to the project data one or more new actions or alterations to existing actions in the project data; and revising the plurality of activities in dependence on whether the

changes are to actions in the project data resulting from step c), as defined by claim 1.

Independent claims 9, 14, 15, 17 and 18 have similar limitations. Thus, these claims and their respective dependent claims are novel with respect to Higgins et al.

II. REFERENCES CITED, BUT NOT RELIED UPON

The Office Action also identified Schultz et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,718,342, asserting that this reference relates to a method and apparatus for network-enabled risk assessment; Shannon, U.S. Patent No. 6,088,678 stating that this reference discusses a system and method for assessing schedule, cost and risk for a project; and Ledet et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,237,915 stating that this reference relates to a game for teaching project management skills including mitigating project risk.

Claim 1 of the present application is also novel with respect to the remaining references cited by the Examiner, because all these documents lack at least the step of revising the plurality of activities in dependence on whether the changes are to actions in the project data, amongst other features.

Claim 1 is also not obvious having regard to the prior art. The person skilled in the art, starting with the disclosure of Higgins et al. would not consider it obvious to include actions within the definition of system requirements. Higgins et al. teaches that risk levels may be calculated based on the system requirements. As explained previously, system requirements, as taught by Higgins et al., are merely metrics related to the inputs and outputs of the project and are clearly distinct from actions, as claimed in the present invention.

The person skilled in the art would also not consider it obvious to analyze the project data to identify a plurality of activities, precisely because the system requirements of Higgins et al. exclude the notion of activities as understood in the present invention. The description of the calculation of risk

levels, as disclosed by Higgins et al., is clearly related to system requirement metrics, distinct from the concept of activities, as required in the claims of the present application.

Higgins et al. further teaches that risk levels may be outputted to a project manager and that the project manager may take decisions to mitigate risks. The system requirements may then be automatically updated. However, as Higgins et al. does not disclose project data, actions or activities, the person skilled in the art would not consider it obvious to output one or more new skilled person to access changes to the project data and revise the plurality of activities in dependence on whether the changes are to actions in the project data. Hence, claim 1 is not obvious over the disclosure of Higgins et al.

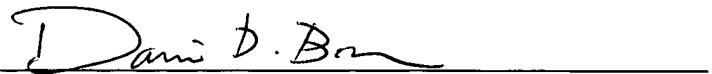
Starting with the disclosures of Higgins et al., the skilled person would not have arrived at the present invention by adding the features disclosed in any of the remaining documents cited by the Examiner, as these documents all lack at least one feature required by claim 1.

The remaining claims of the present invention are both novel and non-obvious over the disclosures of Higgins et al., as they are dependent on claim 1 or recite similar subject matter to claim 1.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTMAN, CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A.

By: 

David D. Brush, Reg. No. 34,557
Suite 1400 - International Centre
900 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3319
Phone: (612) 334-3222 Fax: (612) 334-3312

DDB/tkj